The

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Notes of the Month.

At the Annual Conference of the Trades' Unions many speakers very properly dwelt at length upon the rights of the working classes to try to improve their position and to add to the comfort of their lives. With this ambition no one could fairly quarrel. There was, however, in all the speeches, as reported in the newspapers, a striking want of any reference to those higher religious and moral obligations which bind the workman as well as other people. This is indeed one of the great defects of modern trades' unionism. It fails to impress upon the worker that he has duties to his fellowmen as well as to himself and his family.

"In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere."

* *

Thus wrote the Unitarian poet, Longfellow. Nowadays instances of scamped work are not uncommon. In a newly-erected building in Belfast, in the construction of which no expense had been spared by the generous donor, a serious fire occurred within a few months of its completion. An electric wire had been laid along the top of a wall so that it rested directly on a gas pipe. The electric current naturally soon fused the gas pipe and set fire to the gas, and in a few minutes the roof was ablaze and the lives of the members of a sleeping family were endangered. Fortunately no one was injured. Another case, which happened not long afterwards, did not end so happily. An electric wire was laid upon a gas pipe in the bedroom of a house of entertainment in the same city. The current in due time fused the pipe. The gas escaped into the room. The proprietor of the place was found in bed dead from gas poisoning. At the inquest the jury made some senseless remarks, but did not request that the workman who had placed the electric wire and the gas pipe in such dangerous proximity should be found and brought before them for censure. Many fires in hotels and private houses have been traced to this cause, and many more, which have remained a mystery, were probably the result of similar carelessness on the part of the workmen. This want of conscience on the part of the artisan

has led to innumerable accidents in connection with industrial machinery, motor cars, and many other things besides.

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The Trades' Unions should be as jealous of the reputations of their men as they are of their comforts, and should endeavour to elevate the characters as well as the surroundings of their members. Such occurrences as the above speak ill for the religious and moral training of the workman. What have his parents and religious instructors been doing? Have they been teaching him rightly? If they have, he must be a depraved specimen indeed. These matters are not affairs of technical training. They are essentially religious and moral. Improved teaching in the Sunday School and better training in the home can alone make such accidents less frequent. Only the development of conscience and the sense of individual responsibility can prevent them. Only the feeling that all we do is done under God's eye can help us truly to say—

"Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen."

As things are now, it should be the duty of his trades' union to haul up the delinquent and to make him do right for fear of man if he has failed to do it for the love of God.

* *

The season of the year for the ingathering of the harvest is with us once again. It is pre-eminently a time for rejoicing, though it must be admitted that for many people this year the joy is liable to be much mixed with anxiety. Though the old promise of seed-time and harvest never fails, though sooner or later "all is safely gathered in," and our food supplies once again are replenished, yet this great work is often not accomplished without much fear for the results, and occasionally it would seem as if there was danger of its not getting accomplished at all. When one thinks of the wretched weather of the past summer, when one thinks for instance of hay washed away from many places in the direction of the sea, of corn beaten down by rain and storm, one sees clearly enough the reason for fear and anxiety. But even so, let us readily and thankfully admit that the old promise never fails; the good weather comes again, some portions of the crops get saved, and local loss, though in every case hard to bear, cannot be accepted as evidence of a broken promise. God's goodness is with us all the time, and it is surely ours to be thankful for such mercies as are vouchsafed unto us.

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That we ought to be thankful, that we ought to express our thanks in what we know as harvest festival will, we believe, be the opinion of most people. Nevertheless the contrary opinion has been set forth. One rector in an English parish has decided not to hold such a service, believing that as the harvesters have been idle, and that the crops are either rotting in the fields, or have been washed away by flooded rivers, there could be no note of reality in the thanksgiving. A similar opinion has manifested itself in other quarters. But it is noteworthy that this opinion has not been able to win much way, and there is abundant evidence that the thankful spirit overwhelmingly prevails. We are in entire agreement with a Liverpool rector, who says:—I am quite sure that to refrain from public thanksgiving would be unfaithful and wrong, and would exhibit a very contracted view of the Divine care for the world. A moment's thought will tell us that even if the harvest is "bad" in one locality or one country, or even more, the balance of the produce of the whole world is to be taken into account—not only for the corn, but for everything that sustains the life of man. A total failure of the harvest is never known, and is inconceivable. And the produce of the whole world for the year round is always attained in one form or another. God has never forsaken us, or forgotten His ancient promise; if He did so, even once, the world would die. And we are bound to thank Him that, in spite of our ignorance and mistakes in many ways, the vast millions of mankind are fed from year to year; and

also that the intermittence or failure of supply in one locality or another is the very means of teaching men to think of and care for one another, "that they who gather little may have no lack, and that they who gather much may have nothing over." It is in this spirit that we ought to thank ou God, and not only when we ourselves are specially successful.

THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY.

Extracts from a Sermon Preached at the Annual Unity Guild Service by Rev. G. Leonard Phelps.

IN Old Testament times it was the function of religion, through the medium of the Temple, to direct, suggest, control, not only in matters of belief and ritual, but also of almsgiving, education, government, and other matters now usually considered secular. The Church, to use our modern term for this corporate religious life, was then the sole agency by and through which all departments of life came into touch with the ideal and the spiritual.

The Christian Church is in the direct line of development from the Old Testament conception, but there is no barrier of race; it is an universal brotherhood into which all are called, yet there is a sense in which it is still a body of the elect, a chosen people All are called, but all do not respond to the call. The brotherhood is universal, but the recognition of it is limited. Where two or three, or two or three thousand, are gathered together in the name of the Christ, in the spirit of brotherliness, with a sense of togetherness, a community curbing all selfish desires for the benefit of the whole, there is a gain in serenity and strength, a larger and fuller inspiration, a broader and deeper revelation. It was so in Old Testament times, it was so in the early Christian Church, it is so in our day, when the Church is a living Church.

But the Church has ceased to be the centre from which all activities for human wellbeing are conducted. Not only is education being liberated from eccelsiastical control, and literature and art seeking inspiration beyond her recognised domain, but charity is being severed from too close connection with organised religion. Two great characteristics of our age are a tendency to specialisation and a deeper sense of the solidarity of the race. The former has robbed the Church of numerous functions which had long been hers, the latter has set up many rivals in practical usefulness. Now there is a division of functions, and the Church, instead of pervading the whole of life, tends to have apportioned as her particular work the conduct of worship, the baptising, marrying, and burying of such people as feel the need of some religious observances. The sense of human solidarity is felt not so much as a spiritual brotherhood as the pressing home to men of the necessity of co-operation for the sake of material well-being.

What should the Church be to-day in the midst of these tendencies? In ancient times men and women found that when they came into the sanctuary of God they gained in power to deal with the problems of life. There are problems perplexing us to-day in comparison with which those that vexed them of old time seem trivial. Some of them are the old problems rendered more acute by the amazing complexity of modern life, some are new, called into being by conditions then undreamed of. When we think of so-called secular things in their purely secular relations, when we look out on life from the purely materialistic point of view, we must needs be often disheartened and distracted. Even Herbert Spencer was compelled to admit that "the religion of humanity does not satisfy the soul. The religion of humanity can never exclude the sentiment awakened by that which is behind humanity and behind all things—a Power of which humanity is but a small and fugitive product." And Browning, facing the hard facts of life, gave the same verdict against materialism.

Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, that ineffable Name?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear,
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

Surely we believe that God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear! Surely the musicians who know are the real Church of the living God! The musicians may play different instruments and sound different notes, but they must take the beat from the same conductor and be taking part in the same work. The first need of the Church to-day is a restoration of the lost unity, not the lost uniformity, but the unity of spirit which even while it may continue necessary to keep up our different denominations does not permit the narrow view of the sectarian, but acknowledges that each belongs to the Church of God and has its part to perform, its contribution of thought and work to make. It behoves us, while being faithful to the particular work which our own little denomination has to do, to ever remember that the Church extends far beyond our limits. But in our household of faith this duty is also imperative to make our contribution to the common worship, to cultivate a fellowship of souls, to rid ourselves altogether of all thought of our religion being a sort of spiritual luxury of purely personal concern, to use all our endeavours to make our congregations conform to the ideal, a corporate body of men and women banded together for mutual help in the highest things of life, by true communion with each other holding communion with God, and to recognise no other basis of membership than the earnest desire to do the utmost for the highest, to promote holiness of living, and to strive to make our corner of the vast world a little liker to the kingdom of God.

It is difficult to find a more concise yet complete expression of the proper function of the Church than the fine phrase in Dr. Martineau's prayer—"to be a witness of divine things in all the world." If it be argued that the old conceptions of sacred and secular have passed away, and that all things are divine, then it is the work of the Church to insist on the more general recognition of this truth and a more general acceptance of the obligations which it imposes. The Church cannot hope and should not desire to dominate education, government, or even philanthropy in the same way as it did before the Reformation; these and many other human interests can best be attended to by experts. The Church cannot continue to regard as irreligious the various great movements for the amelioration of the external conditions of human life. One very important function of the Church is to bring all the experts and enthusiasts together, nourish their hope and enthusiasm by the faith that no failure can permanently stand in the way of divine purposes, broaden their outlook and deepen their sympathies by the conviction that all are fellow-workers with God, and save them from supposing that any or all of their activities can avail while the characters of men are unimproved. The success of much noble effort for human betterment may but mean that the house is swept and garnished, and seven times as many evil spirits inhabit it, and the last state becometh worse than the first—unless increasing emphasis be laid on the eternal realities which are behind the changes of time and the delusions of men, unless to the teaching "all things are yours" be added the Church's message "and ye are Christ's, and Christ is Gods'."

The Church should be an universal brotherhood of God-seeking and God-serving men and women, so stirred by the conviction that she possesses a truth which is vital to the life which is life indeed as to be ever bearing witness to it; so filled with the spirit of brotherliness as to know no rest till her limits coincide with the limits of humanity; so serene and strong amid national and social upheavals as to curb the passions and soothe the panics which race and class hatred arouse. She must hold aloft, in season and out of

season, the ideal of perfected individuals in a perfected society ; she must set her heart on building that 'city which is built to music, and therefore never built, and therefore built for ever,' the city of righteousness and peace and truth ; she must boldly face fresh revelations of science and new problems of life ; she must understand and interpret the vague longings of the masses "stumbling and falling in disastrous night, yet hoping ever for the perfect day" ; she must speak in no uncertain voice of the indwelling God, of the reality of beauty and truth and love, of the eternal widsom of living in harmony with these realities and joyfully serving the highest interests of a divine humanity ; she must sing this old yet ever new song with all the soul-stirring sweetness which is the natural gift of those whom God has whispered in the ear

till the earth is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

ROMAN CATHOLIC TENDENCIES IN IRISH PRESBYTERIANISM.

By Dr. John Campbell.

TO the average Irish Presbyterian the suggestion that there is, in the present condition of his Church, any evidence of a tendency towards the Roman Catholic position will come as an unwelcome surprise. Nevertheless the fact remains that within the last seventy years a distinct trend in that direction has been manifest. The change has occurred gradually. The people have not been aware of it. There has been no deliberate intention on the part of the Church to bring about such a change. Its growth has been obscured from time to time under various phases of popular opinion or popular feeling. Unwittingly Irish Presbyterianism has been taking a retrogressive course towards the position against which it for long protested.

When the Church adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as a standard of religious belief to be imposed upon her members, she took a very long step back towards Rome. She destroyed the right of private judgment and set aside that great Reformation principle. She compelled the individual to curb his reason and rein in his intelligence in all matters pertaining to theology and to submit to the dictates of the Church. This is exactly the position of the Catholic. Obedience to the Church in all matters of religious thought is compulsory for the Irish Presbyterian.

Within the last quarter of a century the Presbyterian place of worship was spoken of as a "meeting-house." This was a protest against the Catholic idea that a religious edifice was made specially holy by human consecration and was intended as a reminder that God was omnipresent and that the utterances of the priest could not confer any special sanctity on a building. The old name of "meeting house" is now but seldom used. We hear instead of the "Presbyterian Church" at such and such a place. Moreover, the uses to which the building is put have somewhat changed. The meeting-house was formerly sometimes used for social as well as for religious gatherings. "Soirees" were usually held in it, and the harmless gaiety of such assemblies was not thought to conflict with its use as a place of worship. Now lecture halls and school rooms have been erected near the church, and in them all social and non-religious gatherings are held. This change in custom is evidence of change of opinion, or perhaps of want of thought. While an underlying principle is recognisable in this practice it is unfortunate that the imitation of our Catholic friends has not been more complete. They leave their places of worship open all day and every day so that anyone can use them at any time for prayer or meditation or rest. The Presbyterian Church is open only on one day of the week, except on such special occasions as marriages and occasional week-day services. If the Catholic regards his church as a place set apart by priestly consecration, he also affords the people every oppor-

tunity of coming within the temple and approaching the Most High in His special house.

The form of the building itself has undergone a change. The plain barn-like structure, which stood as a visible protest against an elaborate ritual and a too pronounced appeal to the senses, has been replaced by a more ornate building modelled on the traditional Catholic plan.

Just as we now have the "Presbyterian Church," so we have the "Presbyterian Clergyman." In the old days the professional religious instructor of Presbyterians was content to be the "Presbyterian Minister," the Presbyterian servant of God. Now, in name at least, he assumes a prelatical guise, implying a belief in apostolic succession, which would have been repugnant to his predecessors as savouring of Romanism. The desire of the Church to take a hand in the administration of the National Insurance Act is a very remarkable sign of change of outlook in Irish Presbyterianism. It is the old ambition of the Catholic Church to wield temporal power appearing in a new form and under modern conditions. Another example of the same thing is shown in the matter of secular education, which is virtually in the control of the ministers. The State-paid teachers of our National Schools are for all practical purposes in the grip of the Church.

These things are strangely at variance with the ancient spirit of Presbyterianism, and are hard to distinguish from the more ancient practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace.

* *

Genial manners are good, and power of accommodation to any circumstance, but the high prize of life, the crowning fortune of a man, is to be born with a bias to some pursuit, which finds him in employment and happiness.

THE ELDERSHIP.

By Rev. John Barron.

"AS there were in the Jewish Church elders of the people, joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the Church; so Christ, who hath instituted a government and governors eccelsiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his Church, beside the ministers of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the minister in the government of the Church.

Which officers Reformed Churches commonly call elders.

DEACONS.

The Scripture doth hold out deacons as distinct officers in the Church.

Whose office is perpetual. To whose office it belongs not to preach the word, or administer the sacraments, but to take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor.

OF THE OFFICERS OF A PARTICULAR CONGREGATION.

For officers in a single congregation there ought to be one at the least, both to labour in the word and doctrine and to rule.

It is also requisite that there should be others to join in government.

And likewise it is requisite that there be others to take special care for the relief of the poor.

The number of each of which is to to be proportioned according to the condition of the congregation. These officers are to meet together at convenient and set times, for the well ordering of the affairs of that congregation, each according to his office. It is most expedient, that in these meetings, one whose office is to labour in the word and doctrine, do moderate in their proceedings.

OF CHURCH-GOVERNMENT, AND THE SEVERAL SORTS OF ASSEMBLIES FOR THE SAME.

Christ hath instituted a government, and governors ecclesiastical in the church: to that purpose, the apostles

did immediately receive the keys from the hand of Jesus Christ, and did use and exercise them in all the churches of the world upon all occasions.

And Christ hath since continually furnished some in his church with gifts of government, and with commission to execute the same, when called thereunto.

It is lawful, and agreeable to the word of God, that the Church be governed by several sorts of assemblies, which are congregational, classical, and synodical."

The above is an extract from "The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, As a Part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion betwixt the Churches of Christ in the Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland," anno 1645.

At the foot of the title page is the significant text: Ezek. xliii. 11, "And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof,—and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." Which being paraphrased means that if Presbyterian Church-Government be adopted, then let it be done thoroughly and not left only half-done.

"Ours is only a modified form of Presbyterianism" was a remark once made to me. But, it is either Presbyterianism or it is not Presbyterianism. Presbyterianism is a clearly defined form of church-government, ranging from Church-Sessions through Presbyteries up to Synods and Assemblies, according to the size of the denomination. Our Non-Subscribing Church being only a small one, stops at a Synod as its high-court. If it embraced a large proportion of the population its province would be divided into areas, and the Presbyteries in each of these areas would be under the rule of a Synod, and all the Synods under the rule of a General Assembly. But, as yet, that is in the future. We want to make perfect what we have now got.

Our Code of Discipline, it is true, bears the impress of compromise, and one instance is in the fact that it allows Committees to be substituted for Sessions.

Provision, however, is made for the Eldership, which on the face of this code is evidently optional. There is a definition of a Church-Session, viz.:—"A Session consists of the Minister or Ministers and the Lay Elders or Representatives of a particular Congregation."

Besides this definition, there is a chapter consisting of two sections with rules relating to the Session or Eldership, which as far as I can judge are consistent with the Presbyterian order. But a bridge is required between the chapter on Elders and that on the Committee. The Committee only supplements the Session in ordinary Presbyterian practice. The Session is ex-officio the nucleus of the Committee. That is implied in the rule 2 which refers to the joint management of the Committee and the Session. But, in Presbyterianism, although the Eldership in its spiritual oversight of the congregation acts independently of the Committee, the elected portion of the Committee never acts by itself.

In our Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, the Eldership has been greatly negelcted. Notwithstanding the Code, it is an essential part of Presbyterianism, and can be made a source of strength to minister and people.

Space does not permit to draw analogies between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, or to discuss the place of Presbyterianism in Episcopacy. But the Order of Deacons in the Episcopalian Church, which now is practically confined to young clergymen before becoming "priests" or "presbyters," is the same order as that of the elders with us. In fact the eldership may be said to be the "second order of the ministry," and vice-versa, the ministry may be said to be the first order of the eldership. Consequently, elders are ordained—another point not insisted on by our code. Ordination of elders in the general practice of Presbyterianism is distinguished from that of

ministers, who are given authority to administer the sacraments, by not laying on of hands, and also being administered by the Session, instead of by the Presbytery, as in the case of ministers. But the laying on of hands has been done in the case of elders, I have been told by old people who have witnessed it, and history records its being done at the time of the Puritan Supremacy in England. From personal experience of Presbyterianism from the inside, I know the difference that is made in the understanding of what the office of the holy ministry means when the eldership is recognised and is a living thing. The whole tone of the congregation is raised even by the presence of two or three cultured and devoted men on the eldership. When these can preach they are not regarded so much as "lay" preachers, which means in the minds of many amateur preachers, but just simply as fulfilling a duty which is rightly theirs in case of a deficiency of regular preachers. They are ordained to their office, and are accepted by the congregations as such. Then they form an important link between minister and congregation. Being appointed from the congregation itself, and yet co-operating with the minister in the oversight of the congregation, through the eldership the minister is brought into a friendly intimacy with his flock, from which all element of professionalism disappears. To me it has been a beautiful sight, after a sacrament, to witness the sacred elements carried to the homes of the aged and sick of the congregation by minister and elders, and to observe the private administration of the sacraments, when not only the minister officiated, but one or two of the elders engaged in prayer.

We have heard it said that Presbyterianism is a democratic form of church-government, but only in the use of "democratic" in the best sense in so far as the dignity and value of every human soul is recognised. "Government by the people for the people" was a young minister's description of it recently, which evoked a good deal of applause. But that is a doubtful definition, however acceptable in electioneering. "Government exists for the good of the governed" was the saying of one of the old philosophers. That is not quite the same thing. It recognises variety. The Eldership is based on the order of Nature, which is exemplified in the family. Sterling worth should be recognised, and those who by years of unselfish work in the Church, with whom years have brought wisdom, who in their homes and in their business show themselves circumspect and discreet, should be invited to take office as elders. Freed from theological trammels, but nevertheless having amongst us a faith that is strong and deep, bound together in a service of love, Presbyterianism in our little community, has with us an opportunity which it has nowhere else in the whole world. Shall we obey the mandate in the text affixed to the title of the Great Charter of Presbyterianism to "keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.'

SOME POEMS BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

I HAVE been reading some of this poetry, and been so charmed with it, so deeply impressed and moved by its sweet impression and melody, and most of all by its true ring of modern thought, that I feel impelled to call the attention of your readers to what I treasure as an invaluable volume.

There are but 127 pages of it, but these pages are crammed full of deep thought, written with genuine poetic expression. Here you find in a brief introduction (what is seldom embodied under that heading) a genuine index finger, pointing to what is to follow. May I quote?

"Oh, you who read some song that I have sung—
What know you of the soul from whence it sprung?
Dost dream the poet ever spoke aloud
His secret thought unto the listening crowd?
Go take the murmuring sea-shell from the shore—
You have its shape, its colour—and no more.
It tells not one of those vast mysteries
That lie beneath the surface of the seas.

Our songs are shells cast out by waves of thought ;
Here, take them at your pleasure ; but think not
You've seen beneath the surface of the waves,
Where lie our shipwrecks, and our coral caves.

This practically describes one characteristic of the style of the poetry, viz. :—that the thought therein expressed, while extraordinarily full and deep in itself, is but the vehicle of introduction to other more potent and profound thought to which it invariably leads. While some of the lines in this little book are exquisitely expressed the thought is never sacrificed to the rythm or melody. Hence the writer's production has especial value and merit. There is much genuine worth embedded here in very small compass. Seldom does one find so beautiful poetic expression wedded to so profound and true thought, as for instance in some lines on "Progress," which seem to give equivalent voice to our position as liberal thinkers in religious matters. I shall be glad if you permit me to quote *in extenso*, as any abbreviation would mar it :—

"Let there be many windows to your soul,
That all the glory of the universe
May beautify it. Not the narrow pane
Of one poor creed can catch the radiant rays
That shine from countless sources. Tear away
The blinds of superstition ; let the light
Pour through fair windows, broad as Truth itself
And high as God.
Why should the spirit peer
Through some priest-curtained orifice and grope
Along dim corridors of doubt, when all
The splendour from unfathomed seas of space
Might bathe it with the golden waves of love ?
Sweep up the débris of decaying faiths ;
Sweep down the cobwebs of worn-out beliefs,
And throw your soul wide open to the light
Of Reason and of Knowledge. Tune your ear
To all the worldless music of the stars
And to the voice of Nature, and your heart
Shall turn to truth and goodness, as the plant
Turns to the Sun. A thousand unseen hands
Reach down to help you to their peace-crowned heights,
And all the forces of the firmament
Shall fortify your strength. Be not afraid
To thrust aside half-truths and grasp the whole."

Other remarkable effusions are "Optimism," a true title to the lines ; "Love much" of like nature with optimism breathing a spirit of hope in despair and light in darkness; "Deathless," expressing something like Dickens' "Immortality of goodness"; "Woman," which takes one back to the time before the word "Lady" became of so common use. "Stones," illustrating the worthlessness to spiritual life and religion of the empty forms of much of the public worship of the present day ; and "Beyond," an argument for the immortality of the human soul.

The poems are divided into those of passion, pleasure, life, love, and reflection.

ALEXANDER O. ASHWORTH.

WHY DISAPPOINTMENTS COME.

LIFE makes its offers. "What shall I give thee ?" Each stage of life, each change in circumstance, each period of growth, brings offers as a challenge to our natures. A new position is given in business—what are you going to make of it ? A new love comes into our lives, a new home is to become ours. Are we going to be content with dropping into the commonplace of domestic bickerings, broken by intervals of sickly sentimentality ? Or are we going to make a home that will be the nucleus of a church, a source of the strength of the Empire, the secret inspiration of the love and happiness and usefulness of our own life and of that of others ? New powers of mind and of body come with each advance of life, and the question arises :—"What are you going to do with them ?" The determining point is this :—What in your heart of hearts do you really mean ; what do you actually want ? You will get it most probably. Given normal conditions, given ordinary strength and ability, given a fair amount of perseverance, a man can generally get what he wants. Shall I not be disappointed ? You will, because you will get what you wanted and find that it is not what you want. You will get what you asked for, and then wish that you had asked for something else. Disappointment comes most often not because we do not get what we want, but because we do not want what we

get. How many a man gets money, and then finds that what he wants is not money but mind! How many a woman marries for position, and then finds that what she wants is not position but love! How many a life experience is told in those familiar words, so true, so pathetic, of the successful man:—"Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my king!" Disappointed, because he did not get what he wanted? No, disappointed because he did get it, and found that it was not what he thought it was going to be. But if you want to win for yourself Faith and Hope and Charity, them you will get. And when you have got them there will be no disappointment.

—THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

If one should give me a dish of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would it draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold.

—H. W. BEECHER.

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Bless my work to good, to the fulness of which it is capable, and let me thank Thee for it with joy in the end.

* *

A rush of thoughts is the only conceivable prosperity that can come to us. Fine clothes, equipages, villa, park, social consideration, cannot cover up real poverty and insignificance.

* *

Truth is our element of life; yet if a man fasten his attention on a single aspect of truth, and apply himself to that alone for a long time, the truth becomes distorted, and not itself, but falsehood.

Reports.

Antrim.—The members of the above congregation met at the Manse on August 26th, to say "Good-bye" to Mrs. and Miss Smith, previous to their going to reside in Belfast, and to present Miss Smith with a purse of sovereigns in recognition of her services as Honorary Organist for a great many years. The chair was taken by James S. Hunter, J.P., who in a few well-chosen words alluded to their recent great loss in the death of their late minister, Rev. W. S. Smith, and spoke highly of the esteem in which he and his family were held by the congregation. The Chairman also took the opportunity to explain to the members present their financial position and future prospects generally. Mr. Wm. M. Hunter, Treasurer, then made the presentation. Miss Smith, in reply, thanked them all very heartily indeed for their generous gift and very kind wishes so feelingly expressed. She hoped the members of the Choir would continue to render every assistance in their power to the new organist. Mr. Frank Smith (Bushmills) also responded. Mr. Robert Downey proposed, and Mr. John Gray seconded, a vote of thanks to the Chairman. Miss Smith entertained all present to tea.

Ballyclare.—A delightful outing took place from here on Saturday, August 10th. We were favoured with a day of days—bright glorious sunshine all the time—and a party of over fifty of us, Sunday School, Choir, and Friends, spent a most enjoyable time at Whitehead. The catering was excellent, and those responsible are to be highly congratulated. We went and returned in a couple of brakes, and the result of it all is we are looking forward to next year's outing

Ballymoney.—On Sunday, 1st September, Rev. A Turner, commissioned by the Presbytery of Templepatrick, preached in Ballymoney, and, in accordance with the desire of Rev. David Matts, who has resigned his pastorate there after a prolonged ministry extending over a period of nearly forty-

five years, declared the pulpit vacant. Owing in great measure to the distance which separates Ballymoney from the other churches of the Presbytery interchanges of services between Mr. Matts and his brethren have not been frequent, with the result that Ballymoney, altogether unknown by some members of Presbytery, came to be regarded as more or less of an outpost whose communications always of course quite safe were not greatly availed of. Mr. Matts until recent date was a familiar figure at our annual meetings in Belfast, and the congregation has maintained an honourable tradition in connection with the Orphan Society from its beginning, as well as having identified itself with the new Sustentation Fund. The communications have thus been kept intact. And now that our aged friend has retired from active duty to enter upon a well-earned rest, and that members of Presbytery have begun to visit Ballymoney, they have made the very pleasant discovery that here in the northernmost bounds of the Presbytery is a congregation full of life and activity whose members are staunch and who are devoted to the principles of their Church. Sunday, 1st September, like a great many other days of the year, was wet and miserable, such a day indeed as many people make an excuse to stay at home. But the weather had not that effect on this particular occasion, for, as a matter of fact, a goodly congregation assembled for public worship, and by its punctuality, its attention, its very evident ability to do its part in the Service of the day, made the minister feel that it was good to be there, that he was leading in worship a people who were more than ordinarily interested in their religious home and observances. Speaking of their ability to do their own part in the Service has reference particularly to the music and singing. Miss Matts presided at the harmonium, and was ably supported by a fairly large and well-trained choir. One at once became impressed by the music, both vocal and instrumental, and felt that here in this department of the Service nothing had been left for decision until the last moment, but that everything—the anthem, hymns, and voluntaries—had been very carefully prepared by all concerned. This Service was by no means a solo by the minister, but an act of worship in which all joined from beginning to end. Recognition of this fact is due to Miss Matts, who has gathered the young people together and trained them. But the fact has a greater significance than appears on the surface. For some time now Mr. Matts, who is in his eightieth year, has not always felt himself able to preach. Among other things loss of voice has marked his declining years so that sometimes he preached and sometimes he did not. Under such circumstances one would have expected interest in Sunday worship to decline, but it did not; on the contrary, it kept very much alive, and if the word was not spoken then it was played and sung in a most creditable manner indeed, and all were interested. Miss Matts faced the situation, a bigger and more serious situation than many can imagine since it was domestic as well as eccelsiastical; she faced this situation in an heroic way, and she succeeded. The Ballymoney friends know all about this, and do not hesitate to say how much the Church owes to her and to her self-sacrificing zeal. May others enter into her labours and do as well! The pulpit is now vacant, and it is to be hoped Mr. Matts' successor will come soon, for long vacancies are to be deplored. He, the successor, will find a kindly hospitable people to welcome him among whom he ought to work with pleasure and satisfaction.

Cairncastle.—A congregational gathering of members and children connected with the Old Meetinghouse was held on Friday, 30th August—one of the most sun-and-moonshiny dates of the current year. The children, who were supplied with tea and other refreshments in the National Schoolhouse, played games in a neighbouring delightfully situated field, kindly lent by Mr. Joseph Sherriff, later giving place to their elders, who danced upon the green until the setting of the greater

luminary obliged them to adjourn to the school-house.

Larne.—One of the most enjoyable summer functions in Larne is the Cake Fair and Conversazione promoted annually by the Music Committee of the Old Presbyterian Congregation of Larne and Kilwaughter. The entire absence of formality, the variety of the entertainments, and the energy and enterprise devoted by the Committee to the comfort and amusement of the visitors, makes the function a pleasant re-union for members of the congregation, and the means of a most enjoyable evening's entertainment for residents generally. On Tuesday afternoon last, favoured by one of the most summerlike days of the past two months, the grounds round the Meetinghouse, admirably adapted as they are for an *alfresco* entertainment, looked their best. In the afternoon the rich foliage of the trees and the well-arranged decorations made a very pretty scene, whilst at night the illuminations converted the grounds into a veritable fairyland, attractive to young and old. In the schoolhouse a number of prettily decorated stalls bore ample evidence of the hard work of the friends connected with the congregation, articles of beauty, of utility, and of dainty toothsomeness, vieing with each other in appeal to visitors, and it is pleasing to record that before closing time the appeal was so well answered that empty stalls delighted the eyes of the amateur saleswomen. At half-past three o'clock the Rev. James Kennedy declared the sale open, and expressed what a pleasure it was in the most literal sense for him to be with them once more at that annual function. A highly successful organ recital was given in the church at 8 p.m. by Mr. E. Holmes, Organist. Miss Dorothy Haywood, of London, soprano, who is fully justifying the hopes of her friends from year to year, and Mr. Curran, Precentor of First Larne Presbyterian Church, who is as much appreciated in Belfast as in Larne, assisting. Allied to a voice of great beauty, Miss Haywood has a temperament which enables her to use that organ to the best advantage. Voice and temperament are the complement of each other—a happy combination which affords us a vocalist of exceptional capacity. Gounod's beautiful setting of "There is a Green Hill Far Away," and Frances Bohr's "Thy Will Be Done," were sung with a lofty dignity and devotional fervour. The pure enunciation and clean cut phrasing were evidence of the vocalist's conscientiousness and technical ability. Along with these there were extraordinary richness of volume and tone, and a depth of feeling which seemed the outcome of the singer's individuality. Mr. William Curran, who for many years has been held in the highest esteem by Belfast audiences as a richly gifted vocalist and a clever interpreter of classical vocal music, gave a perfect rendering of the recit., "I go on my way with the strength of the Lord," and aria, "For the mountains shall depart" (Mendel), together with Barrie's fine setting of the "Good Shepherd." Mr. Curran's voice is of execptional quality to which may be added an adequate register and a cultured style. Both items were rendered in a very devotional manner. Mr. Holmes is a most capable organist, whose recitals are always welcome. The finished rendering of the Wagner items show that he has been very diligent in his study of this composer, and the freedom and intensity of his style, combined with his admirable command of technique, make him an ideal interpreter of the Master's works. The variation of the theme, "O ! Sanctissima," better known as the hymn tune, "Mariners," served to show that the special qualities and capabilities of the organ are understood by the player. The two smaller pieces, Dvorak's "Humoreske" and "Home Melody," by Clegg, were also played in a dainty and accomplished manner. Special mention should also be made of the sympathetic way in which Mr. Holmes accompanied the vocalists. During the evening the various outdoor amusements proved a great attraction, and were eagerly patronised by the large crowd of visitors. Wright's Bijou Orchestra rendered a splendid

selection of popular music in the grounds to the appreciation of all.

Newry.—On Thursday evening last week the Choir of the Newry Unitarian Church met in the School-room to bid farewell to the Misses Lockhart, two of its members, who are leaving for Winnipeg in a few days. Tea was arranged by the Misses M'Combe (Organist) and S. Warnock, and served by Mrs. Slipper and Mrs. Henning. After tea, Rev. G. J. Slipper presided, and in a short address expressed both the regrets of the Choir and the gratitude of all for the loyalty and warm interest they have shown in the affairs of the Church. In the name of all the members he wished them "God-speed," and every blessing in the new home to which they were going, and presented to each a gold brooch as a keepsake and a reminder of the affection of their fellow-members, as well as of the happy days they had spent in the church. Mr. John Thompson also briefly addressed the meeting, and Miss M. Lockhart responded. The remainder of the evening was devoted to music and conversation.

Templepatrick.—A very interesting meeting of the Templepatrick Congregation was held in the Roughfort School-room, on Friday evening, 20th September, when their minister, Rev. A. Turner, was made the recipient of a handsome pulpit gown. The movement originated among the younger people of the congregation, and was brought to a successful issue, especially by Miss Bessie Barnett, Miss Leta Birkmyre, and Miss Jenny Parker. The elders of the congregation gave their heartiest sympathy and support and helped in every way to make the presentation and the gathering a success. All partook together of tea at 8 o'clock, after which Mr. Joseph Kell was moved to the chair. Mr. Kell briefly addressed the meeting, and then called upon Miss Leta Birkmyre to make the presentation, which she did in fitting terms and amidst applause. Rev. A. Turner duly acknowledged the beautiful gift with sincerest thanks, pointing out that whilst he was especially pleased to be the recipient of such a handsome pulpit robe, he nevertheless was equally pleased to know of that kind thoughtfulness and feeling which prompted the gift. In the course of subsequent remarks he, the minister, drew attention to what had been accomplished by the present generation with regard to their church property in Templepatrick and at the Roughfort, and urged the young people to make the fullest use of their religious home. It was well to have such property and in such a fine state of preservation, but it was not well to be content with regarding the property as the end of their ideals. Their Church stood for religion, for spiritual life, for non-subscription in theology, and he trusted for the production of straight, honourable, dependable characters in the life that now is. In conclusion, Mr. Turner again expressed his thanks, remarking that the gift of that evening, with its implied kindness, would certainly prove an inspiration and an encouragement to him in the days to come. Subsequently an enjoyable entertainment, consisting of music vocal and instrumental, was carried out, in which the performers were Miss Clara Birkmyre and Messrs. John Carruth and A. Campbell. Mr. A. Birkmyre moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman, including the performers and the ladies, which was seconded by Rev. A. Turner, and carried with acclamation, and then the benediction brought a very happy meeting to that climax of its development. The young people remained for a little while longer, and as there was a piano present and several people capable of performing thereupon, they no doubt found ways and means of prolonging their entertainment.

Unity Guild.—The members of the Guild will have cause to remember the apology for a summer that is just departing, if from no other reason than the fact that their Excursion Programme was marred on more than one occasion by unfavourable climatic conditions. The June outing to Dunmurry and Colin Mountain was a particularly joyful afternoon for lovers of heavy showers, although the elements did repent before the end of the day came,

and some of the more active spirits had a good climb. For the August fixture we were fortunate enough to leave a heavy thunder-shower behind in the City, and find the Gobbins' Cliffs bathed in sunshine. The latter portion of the great holiday month and the opening days of September were so atrocious, however, that the Crumlin outing fixed for September 7th had perforce to be abandoned, as members would not risk it—very wisely so, as it happened. For the following day, however, matters improved somewhat, and it was not a bad afternoon for the Annual Service in First Church, when in his capacity as President, Rev. G. L. Phelps was the preacher. It is meet to place on record here an appreciation of the manner in which the First Church Choir responded to the call, and also of the kindness of Mr. Teasdale Griffiths, A.R.C.O., who officiated at the organ, in the absence of a regular exponent at the Church. Interest is now centered on the fast-approaching Winter Session, which will be inaugurated at the Central Hall on Wednesday, October 16th, by a lantern lecture, entitled "Mr. Punch Here, There, and Everywhere." It is hoped to have the syllabus in members' hands by a date very shortly after the issue of this number of the Magazine, and it is confidently anticipated that good attendances will be a feature of the Session.

Echoes.

Can a good tree bring forth evil fruit? Sometimes, apparently. Mr. Emerson sent his pears and apples to the agricultural fair at Concord, and the Prize Committee visited him to make enquiry how it was possible for him, with such good varieties, to raise such poor specimens. I think that sometimes Unitarians have found themselves making a similar inquiry, wondering much and humiliated not a little, when they have found the Unitarian trees a choice variety they had supposed, bearing so little fruit of righteousness, so little sympathy, kindliness, and aspiration, and, not far away, some gnarled and scrubby Presbyterian blossoming like an apple tree in early June or bending to the ground under the weight of ruddy fruit. Sincere and intense heart-conviction and devotion to high ideals is the secret of fruitfulness, and when Unitarianism fails to yield its fruit it is because it has become a mere opinion—a dogma that has no spiritual truth at the heart of it. It is to little purpose that we boast of being a select few, the pioneers of a larger and fuller faith, if we are not pioneers of holy living, select by virtue of our charitableness and neighbourliness.

—*John White Chadwick.*

* *

The Jews of old used to take long journeys to attend the Feast of the Passover, when they travelled from distant parts of Palestine to Jerusalem. Travelling was very slow and tedious. Jesus and his parents went from Nazareth, a distance of about 70 miles. But all this is surpassed by the acts of Mahometans under similar but greater disadvantages at the present day in regard to their religious duties. The Bishop of London, when in Africa recently, saw a youth on his way to Mecca in Arabia to visit the grave of Mahomet. He had travelled from two to three thousand miles, and had been engaged on the journey between two and three years, his father, who had set out with him, having died by the way. God would provide for the journey, he said. The Bishop also met with three women, a mother and two daughters, who were on the return journey from Mecca. They had spent twelve years in travelling! What religious zeal and determination do these instances show! Though we may think such journeys quite unnecessary, they contain a lesson for every one—that of faithfulness.

BIRTH.

M'KEOWN—On August 28th, at Park View Terrace, Woodvale Road, Belfast, the wife of Arthur M'Keown—a son.

'Tis pitiful the things by which we are rich or poor,—a matter of coins, coats, and carpets, a little more or less stone, or wood, or paint, the fashion of a cloak or hat; like the luck of naked Indians, of whom one is proud in the possession of a glass bead or a red feather, and the rest miserable in the want of it.

* * *

Unto God is known that which is secret in heaven and earth. All is in the open book.

* *

God bids you come often from the noise and strife and tumult of life, bids you shut the door, that you may pray to your Father in secret. It is there strength comes for the toil and weariness of life. It needs not long for this; not long to gather round you that sweet sense of Fatherhood which shall make the whole day sacred. A moment or two of solemn speech with God, before the great tide of busy life flows in upon the soul, one short clasp of the Father's hand, one quick glance into His holy loving eyes, will make the whole day sacred.

—G. DAWSON.

* *

As a little child relies
On a care beyond his own,
Knows he's neither good nor wise,
Fears to take a step alone,—
Let me thus with Thee abide
As my Father, Guard, and Guide.

— ULSTER —

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